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The Beaver County Airport is receiving a \$2,557,250 federal grant to rehabilitate its runway, which handles general aviation and military traffic.

The county-owned airport in Chippewa is mainly used to train pilots and air traffic controllers. There are no passenger flights at the airport.

Bids should go out in the fall and work is expected to begin next spring.

The runway is 4,500 feet long and 100 feet wide. It has not been resurfaced since 1990, said airport director Beth C. LaValle.

Though the runway is old and has some cracks, it is rated as being in "fair" condition, she said.

The grant money comes from the Federal Aviation Administration through the state Department of Transportation. The grant was announced by U.S. Rep. Jason Altmire, D-McCandless.

"It is critical that we make improvements to our smaller local airports so they can continue to be competitive with larger airports in the region," Mr. Altmire said.

Last year, the airport received a \$250,000 grant for design work on the runway.

A couple of inches of the current runway will be "milled" or ground down before new asphalt is applied.

Milling and resurfacing is expected to take about four days, and the pilots who use the runway

are being consulted about the best days to do the work, Ms. LaValle said.

"On behalf of the Beaver County Airport Authority Board, the airport users and myself, we are very excited and grateful for this highly anticipated project," she said. "We thank all who were instrumental in making it a reality for us."

A total of 159 planes are based at the airport. There are two flight schools operating there, including instruction offered through the Community College of Beaver County.

The county-owned, public-use airport is off the Chippewa exit of Interstate 376, three miles northwest of the Beaver Falls central business district.